



FRONT PORCH SERIES BROADCAST CALLS

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM CONSUMER REPORT: FOR HEAD START CLASSROOMS

Dr. Bridget Hamre, the University
of Virginia's Center for Advanced Study
of Teaching and Learning (CASTL)



QUESTIONS FROM THE OCTOBER 27, 2014 FRONT PORCH SERIES BROADCAST CALL

- Q:** About research-based and evidence-based [curriculum], which one is more important?
- A:** This is a question that we hear time and again. In part, because people use these words interchangeably sometimes and it can be really confusing.

When we think about research-based, we really define that as the extent to which curricula are based on child development principles. So, did the developers, as they were developing the curriculum, use the best and latest evidence about what we know about how children learn? That's really, really critical. But that's not necessarily sufficient. We also want to know whether or not the way the whole curricular package is put together actually leads to outcomes for kids. Those are the second and third components, whether they've been studied in rigorous studies, and the extent to which they demonstrate impacts on child outcomes.

I don't think it's an either/or. I think both of those are exceptionally critical. I think the challenge for Head Start programs is that our evidence-based just isn't that great. Some of these curricula have been studied and haven't shown impacts, so that's concerning. But many of the curricula simply haven't even been studied and so we just don't know. That's where the research community needs to do a better job of partnering with Head Start communities to understand the extent to which these work in larger, rigorous trials.

What's most important in the meantime, I would say, is for you to really dig into the data in an authentic way in your own programs and be able to document really, really clearly that your children are meeting the developmental markers that they need to meet across these domains. And I think if you can do that, and if you feel very confident in the rigor of the data that you have, and you look across these other components on which these curricula were reviewed, then I think that's really what we want programs to be doing at this point as we're waiting for more solid evidence to come from research.



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